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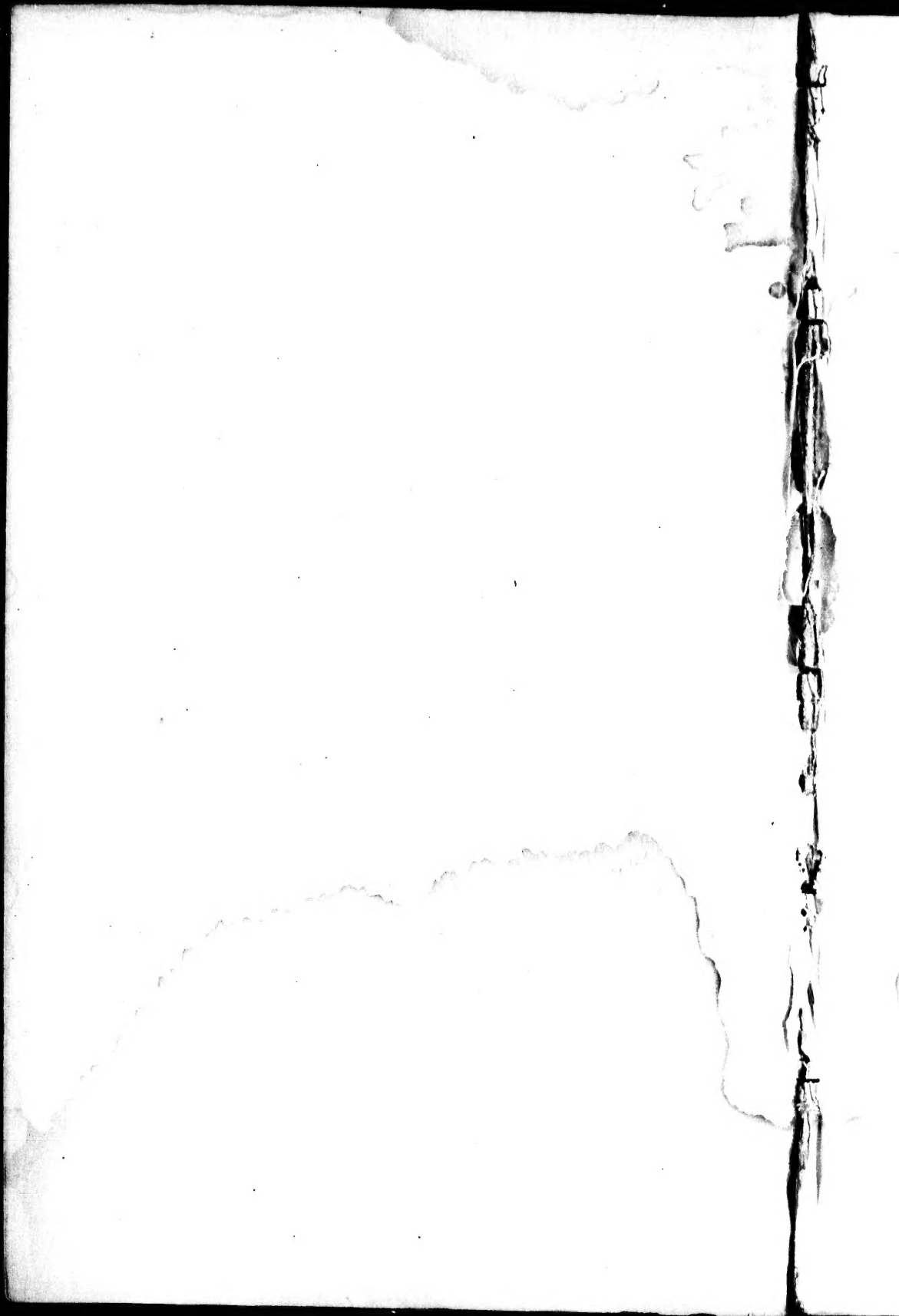
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MEDICAL QUACKS AND QUACKERIES.

By FRANCIS J. SHEPHERD, M. D.

[Reprinted from THE POPULAR SCIENCE MONTHLY, June, 1883.]



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JOHNSON defines a quack as "a boastful pretender to an art he does not understand," and perhaps the term is more often applied to boastful pretenders of the art of medicine than of any other.* Probably, ever since man acquired the faculty of articulate language, quacks and quackeries have flourished. In the ruder ages, man attributed all disease to the influence of evil spirits, and sought by various means to ward off or lessen their injurious and malevolent actions. Now, as an eminent physiologist has lately said, the controlling of unknown powers has always been a matter of some difficulty, and one which ordinary mortals with average ability could not successfully attempt; hence arose a class of specialists—men who, by their greater knowledge and cleverness, made others believe that they were able to cope with the unseen. These were the priests, and, without doubt, the first quacks. They supplied charms and potions, and made use of incantations, not only to cure, but to prevent disease. These services obtained for them great power and influence and increased wealth. The ancient Egyptians attributed all diseases to the anger of the gods. They worshiped Serapis as a medical divinity, and the cure of disease could only be accomplished through the intercession of this deity's priests. Thus the priests had the monopoly of medical practice, and their medical knowledge was jealously concealed from the vulgar; it was only divulged to those who with extravagant ceremonies, wonderful mummeries, and terrible vows of secrecy, were initiated into the Egyptian mysteries. It was thus that Pythagoras is supposed to have obtained the foundation of his medical knowledge and philosophy. Among the Israelites the priests had charge of the health of the people, and in time of plague and pestilence relied wholly on religious methods of cure. According to the accounts that have come down to us, these methods were most successful. In highly civilized Greece, priests, the direct descendants of Æsculapius, cured disease by mysterious ceremonies, music, offer-

* "'Quack' is said to be an abbreviated form of 'quacksalver,' which is derived from the Dutch *Kwabzalver*—from *Kwab*, a *wen*, and *Zalver*, an ointment."—*Notes and Queries*.

ings, fastings, and such like. In Rome, when a plague broke out, the priests endeavored to combat it by feasting the gods, or driving nails into the right wall of the Temple of Jupiter. The early Christian Church was strongly opposed to the progress of medicine. It believed that the power of curing disease had been transmitted from Christ and his apostles to their bishops and elders. They discarded altogether the use of medicinal agents, and healed the sick by prayer, the laying on of hands, and the anointing with oil. This form of treatment, being of the miraculous order, needed no knowledge of the nature of disease, or of the structure of the human frame. Heathen priests and physicians were regarded as sorcerers and dealers in witchcraft, and so were burned or otherwise put out of the way. For some centuries the monks monopolized all the medical practice and quackery. They made a good living, selling for large sums of money remnants of ancient martyrs, waters of holy wells, portions of the true cross, etc., as a protection against sickness, witchcraft, evil spirits, and other ills that flesh was heir to in those dark ages. They prayed to St. Anthony for inflammation, St. Valentine for epilepsy, St. Clara for sore eyes, St. Apollonia for toothache, St. Vitus for madness and poison, and so on.* It was not till after the breaking up of the powers of the priesthood by the Reformation, and the introduction of printing, that medicine began to escape from the grasp of quackery and made rapid strides toward the truth, perfecting knowledge of disease by accurate observation and the study of the human frame and its workings in health. That the emancipation of medicine from superstition did not immediately take place is evidenced by the wonderful hold the belief in the cure of scrofula by the royal touch had on the people, both medical and lay, for many years after the Reformation, nay, almost down to our own time. This most remarkable form of quackery, and one, according to some, peculiarly English in its origin, was exercised in England for nearly seven hundred years. Edward the Confessor was the first who touched for the king's-evil, and transmitted the gift to all his successors. His power was attributed not to his royalty but to his sanctity, and there "seemed little reason why his successors, who were, as a

* The Medical Rose offers a peculiar and very approved remedy for epilepsy. Advising the patient to stand upright, saying the Lord's prayer with the mouth wide open to prevent the first attack, and informing us that a lunatic, an epileptic, and a demoniac were the same, he gives the following sacrophysical directions: "When the patient and his parents have fasted three days, let them conduct him to a church. If he be of a proper age and in his right senses, let him confess. Then let him hear mass on Friday, during the fast of *quatuor temporum*, and also on Saturday. On Sunday let a good and religious priest read over his head in church the gospel which is read in September in the time of vintage, after the feast of the Holy Cross. After this, let the same priest write the same gospel devoutly, and let the patient wear it about his neck, and he shall be cured. The gospel is, 'This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.'"—("Rosa Anglica," p. 78, edition 1491; *ib.*, p. 415, edition 1595—quoted in Willcock's "Laws of the Medical Profession," p. 25, edition 1830.)

rule, no saints, should be so specially favored." The kings of France also claimed the right to dispense the gift of healing, and traced their right to Clovis. Queen Anne was the last to exercise this gift in England, and it is well known that she touched, among others, the celebrated Dr. Johnson, who was brought to the King by his mother on the recommendation of Sir John Floyer, a distinguished physician of Litchfield.* William III had too much sense to pander to the superstitious feelings of many of his subjects, and never employed the touch but once, and then he said, on laying his hands on the patient, "May God give you better health and more sense!" Queen Elizabeth was averse to the practice, but extensively performed it. Charles II excelled all his predecessors and successors in this ceremony. During his reign he touched nearly one hundred thousand persons for the evil. One year (1682) over eight thousand sufferers were subjected to his sacred touch. The patients were first examined by the King's surgeons, and, if thought to be fitting objects of relief, they were given tickets to admit them to the royal presence. When admitted, the patient knelt and was touched by the King. The clerk of the closet now handed his Majesty a gold coin, to which was attached a piece of white ribbon, and, while the King hung this round the neck of the patient, others read the prayers and ceremonies specially appointed for this purpose. We are told that the gold was a token of good-will, and not necessary to the cure, as many were healed without it, or with silver employed instead. Evidences of the efficacy of the royal touch are not wanting: Jeremy Collier says of Edward the Confessor: "That this prince cured king's-evil is beyond dispute, and, since the credit of this miracle is unquestionable, I see no reason why we should not believe the rest." John Browne, surgeon to Charles II, and a man of eminence and reputation in his profession, wrote an "Anatomick-Chirurgical Treatise on Glandules and Strumæ, together with the Royal Gift of Healing or Cure thereof by Contact or Imposition of Hands," etc. In this treatise he gives "many wonderful examples of cures by the sacred touch" of Charles II; he also relates several cases of scrofulous tumor and sore cured by being touched with handkerchiefs which had been dipped in the blood of the martyr Charles I, and asserts that the usurper Cromwell tried in vain to exercise this royal prerogative, "he having no more right to the healing power than he had to regal jurisdiction." Wiseman, in his work on surgery, which was the best book on the subject at that time, says: "I myself have been a frequent eye-witness of many hundred cures performed by his Majesty's touch alone, without any assistance of chirurgery"; still it does not appear that he sent his patients to the King, and he gives his own method of curing scrofula with great minuteness. This evidence as to the cures is apparently

* The gold coin presented to Dr. Johnson by the Queen is at the present time in the British Museum.

most complete, and is that of men skilled in the medical art who were eye-witnesses and assisted in the ceremonies. Of course now no one believes that there was virtue in the royal touch any more than that the philosopher's stone could convert baser metals into gold. If the King could cure scrofula, how is it that during Charles II's reign scrofula was more prevalent than for many years previously? No doubt it was because people neglected ordinary methods of treatment, in their desire to be cured miraculously.

The only way it is possible to explain the evidence of Browne and Wiseman is that they were ardent royalists, and held the efficacy of the royal touch to be as much a party tenet as the divine right of kings, and that by doing so they pleased the court and so advanced their own interests. Had they doubted it, they would have incurred the suspicion of being disaffected to the government.* Failures of cure were attributed, as in our own day, to want of faith, as one writer puts it, "none ever failed of receiving benefit unless their little faith and credulity starved their merits."

Curing diseases by the laying on of hands was practiced with great success by Valentine Greatraikes, an Irish gentleman of good family, who served under Cromwell both in a military and civil capacity. At the Restoration, being deprived of his offices, he undertook to cure the king's-evil by touch, or stroking, as it was called; he succeeded so well in this that he extended the field of his labors and treated epilepsy, asthma, convulsions, deafness, etc., by the same method. The latter diseases being all due to disorders of the nervous system, benefit was no doubt frequently obtained through the effect of the imagination. "Imagination," says Lord Bacon, "is next akin to a miracle-working faith." Greatraikes's fame soon spread, and he was sent for from far and near; the Earl of Orrery and Lord Conway patronized him, and he even deceived the great Robert Boyle. At length he arrived in London, where for some time he was most popular. The majority of his admirers were ladies, and on the more hysterical of the sex he performed marvelous cures. Soon, however, the tongues of slander and ridicule assailed him, and he retired to his native country and obscurity. Many others succeeded Greatraikes. John Everett, or Leverett, the seventh son of a seventh son, and a gardener, practiced the "manual exercise," and declared that after touching thirty to forty a day he felt the goodness go out of him. No doubt these people practiced unconsciously what Mesmer many years after practiced by design. On the subject of Mesmerism and spiritualism I do not propose to enter. Of late years cures by the laying on of hands,

* One Thomas Rosewell was actually tried for high treason in 1684 for saying that "people made a flocking to the King, upon pretense of being healed of the king's-evil, which he could not do, but that they, being priests and prophets, could by their prayers do as much." Rosewell was tried by the celebrated Judge Jeffries and found guilty, but afterward pardoned.—(Wadd's "Mems and Maxims," p. 136.)

assisted, however, by prayer, and the anointing with oil, have become very common, especially in the United States, the hot-bed of all sorts of quackeries. This summer there has been a "faith convention" at Old Orchard, in Maine, where many people were publicly cured by this method; all the diseases treated appeared to be, from the indefinite history of cases reported in religious newspapers, affections of the nervous system. Many hysterical cases were possibly benefited purely by the effect of the imagination: as the diseases are ones of the imagination, so are the cures. We have yet to hear of a case of actual disease, such as is daily seen in our hospitals, cured by this method.

The immediate progenitor of our present race of quacks is Paracelsus, who flourished in the sixteenth century; he generally styled himself Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Paracelsus Bombastus von Hohenheim. His father, who was the natural son of a prince, gave him an excellent education. He studied medicine, and afterward was for some time professor at Basle, in Switzerland. Paracelsus denied the utility of knowing the cause or mode of origin of disease; he said all he wanted to know was, how to cure it. He styled himself the monarch of physicians, and asserted that the hair on the back of his head knew more than all the writers from Galen to Avicenna, and he publicly burned their books. He invented a nostrum called "azoth," which he vaunted as the philosopher's stone, the tincture of life. He proclaimed that he had the power of making man immortal, yet he died at the age of forty-eight. Still, by the aid of opium, antimony, and mercury, he performed some wonderful cures, and to him must be awarded the credit of first drawing the attention of the profession to the value of these remedies in the treatment of diseases. He also helped medicine to advance by showing contempt for traditional methods of treatment and the humoral pathology of the ancients, which had held sway for over two thousand years.

The most remarkable example of credulity and superstition of the public is found in the history of two quackeries which flourished in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I refer to the *weapon-ointment* and *sympathetic-powder* cures. The weapon-ointment was used in healing wounds; but, instead of the ointment being applied to the wound, it was applied to the weapon which caused it. This was fortunate for the people so treated, as the applications to fresh wounds in those times were most barbarous. The ointment was prepared in various ways, and its ingredients were most diverse, consisting of human fat and blood, mummy, moss from a dead man's skull, bull's blood and fat, etc. At one time there was a schism in the weapon-salve school, and a serious and acrimonious discussion arose as to "whether it was necessary that the moss should grow absolutely on the skull of a thief who had hung on the gallows, and whether the ointment, while compounding, was to be stirred with a murderer's knife." The mode of application was this: The wound was first washed, bandaged, and ordered to

be kept at rest, and then the offending weapon was anointed with the salve, carefully wrapped up, and placed in a safe position. If the weapon was left undisturbed the wound healed in a few days, but, if anything happened to the anointed weapon the wound would break out afresh. In Dryden's version of Shakespeare's "Tempest," he makes Ariel say, in reference to the wound received by Hippolito from Ferdinand :

"He must be dressed again, as I have done it :
Anoint the sword which pierced him with this weapon-salve ;
Wrap it close from air, till I have time to visit him again."

In Glapthorne's comedy, "The Hollander," the doctor says, "The same salve will cure at any distance, as if a person hurt should be at York, the weapon dressed at London, on which the blood is." That the belief in this salve was not universal is proved by an attack made on it by John Hales, of Eton, in a letter "to an honorable person" in 1630. He declares it is a child of but yesterday's birth, one among the pleasant fantasies of the Rosicrucians ; and, as for the cures it has worked, "the effect is wrought by one thing, and another carries off the glory," etc.*

The *sympathetic powder* was much the same kind of remedy, and was introduced into England by Sir Kenelm Digby, a gentleman of the bedchamber of Charles I. It is said that a Carmelite friar, returning from the East, brought the recipe for this powder with him. Sir Kenelm did him some service, and was rewarded by obtaining the secret of the sympathetic powder. It consisted merely of blue vitriol prepared with mysterious ceremonies. Digby revealed the secret to James I, who disclosed it to Dr. Mayerne, his physician. The latter sold it to many distinguished persons, and then it soon ceased to be a secret. A solution of the powder was made, and some of the wounded man's blood-stained garments immersed in it, the wound at the same time being washed and bandaged, and strict abstinence being enjoined on the patient. As may be inferred, the sympathetic powder, like the weapon-salve, was quite as efficacious at a distance as near by. These remedies did one good : they taught people how soon wounds heal if kept clean and undisturbed, and, in fact, opened the way to our present method of treating wounds. Surgeons learned that, in their healing, Nature was a powerful factor, and must be aided, not interfered with.†

It would be impossible for me to describe a tenth part of the quacks who flourished in England during the eighteenth century. There was Joanna Stevens, to whom Parliament voted £5,000 in 1739, for dis-

* Chambers's "Book of Days," vol. ii.

† A somewhat similar superstition exists in many parts of the country to this day. I well remember, when a child, that, having my hands full of warts, they were rubbed by my nurse with a piece of raw meat ; the meat was then placed under a stone, and I was told (and this was generally believed) that as the meat decayed the warts would disappear. The result of the experiment I can not remember, but I imagine the warts remained for some time after the decay of the meat.

closing the secret of her remedy for dissolving stone. The wonderful secret remedy consisted chiefly of powdered snail- and egg-shells, and, notwithstanding its disclosure, "there have been as many human calculi since formed by his Majesty's liege lithotomical subjects as would macadamize one side of Lincoln's Inn Fields," says Wadd. David Hartley, the philosopher, was a great supporter of Joanna Stevens, and, after eating two hundred pounds' weight of her remedy, he himself died of the stone. There was Sir William Read, originally a tailor and cobbler, and afterward a quack oculist, knighted by Queen Anne, and who not only had the care of her eyes, but also treated George I. There was the clever but vain Hill, who quacked a gout specific called "tincture of bandana," and of whom Garrick has happily said :

"For physick and farces his equal there scarce is—
His farce is a physick, his physick a farce is."

He commenced life as an apothecary, and ended by making a considerable figure in the fashionable world and marrying the sister of Lord Ranelagh.

Three of the most notorious quacks who imposed on the credulity of the public during the middle of the eighteenth century attained sufficient fame to be made the subject of a satirical picture by Hogarth. The picture was called "The Undertaker's Arms," with the motto "*Et plurima mortis imago*," and the most prominent figures in it were—first, Chevalier Taylor, a quack oculist of unparalleled effrontery, who wrote a most marvelous biography of himself, which at one time had a great sale ; second, Joshua Ward, originally a footman, who invented a pill and drop ; he was called in to see the King, who, in spite of the remedies administered, recovered—Ward for his services received a vote of thanks from the House of Commons, and got leave to drive his carriage through St. James's Park ; and, third, last but not least, the celebrated Mrs. Mapp, the Amazonian bone-setter of Epsom, who surpassed all her rivals in quackery, and whose strength of arm was only equaled by her strength of language. She was the daughter of Wallis, a bone-setter, and sister of "Polly Peachem," who married the Duke of Bolton. She drove about London in a coach-and-six with outriders, and the most exalted in rank and station eagerly sought the company of this drunken female savage. She succeeded Taylor and Ward, and is sung of as follows by some Grub Street poet :

"In physick as well as in fashion we find
The newest has always the run with mankind ;
Forgot in the bustle 'bout Taylor and Ward,
Now Mapp's all the cry, and her fame on record.
So what signifies learning, or going to school,
When woman can do without reason or rule ? "

England in the eighteenth century has been truly named the "Paradise of Quacks." Our ancestors were assuredly a nostrum-loving lot, from the King to the peasant. Truly they must have thought with the

prophet, "The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth ; and he that is wise will not abhor them" (Ecclesiasticus xxxviii, 4). Perhaps the most remarkable of unblushing quacks who flourished toward the end of the eighteenth century was Dr. Graham, a graduate of Edinburgh, and a fellow-student of Sir James Mackintosh. He introduced Mesmerism into England, and was nearly as successful as his master. In 1780 he went to London and occupied a magnificent mansion, which he designated the "Temple of Health and Hymen." It was gorgeously furnished, and a fortune was spent on the decorations. The spacious rooms were adorned with marble statues, stands of armor, plates of burnished steel, and superbly lighted with wax-candles ; sweet strains of distant music were continually floating through the air, and delicious perfumes were always burning in swinging censers ; at the door were stationed two gigantic porters, clad in showy liveries covered with gold lace. In this "Enchanting Elysian Palace" Dr. Graham delivered his lectures on health and procreation at two guineas a head, and he did not want for hearers. In his *séances* he was assisted by a beautiful woman, whom he called Vestina, the rosy goddess of health—she who afterward became Lady Hamilton, the favorite of Nelson. In the daytime he was assisted in his electrical experiments by Dr. Mitford, the father of the celebrated authoress. In this temple was a celestial bed standing on glass legs and ornamented with the richest hangings ; he pretended that childless married pairs who slept in this bed would be certain to have heirs. The price was £100 a night, and many persons of high rank eagerly accepted the terms. He then advertised an elixir of life, which, it is said, he sold to more than one noble simpleton for £1,000. One mode of treatment he recommended for prolonging life was the frequent use of mud-baths. Soon, from his religious extravagances, Graham became unpopular, and, retiring from public life, he died poor in the neighborhood of Glasgow.

A species of quackery called "Perkinism," which made a stir in the world in the beginning of the present century, I must now shortly describe, for, among the delusions which have succeeded in imposing on men of education and position, it is pre-eminent. It originated in America, and to Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes I am indebted for most of my information on the subject. Dr. Elisha Perkins was born in Connecticut, in 1740 ; he practiced with success for many years, but, being inspired by the recent discoveries of Galvani, he conceived the idea that metallic substances applied in a certain manner might remove disease. In 1796 he gave to the world his metallic "Tractors." These consisted "of two pieces of metal, one iron and one brass, about three inches long, blunt at one end and pointed at the other." They (so he affirmed) "cured rheumatism, local pains, inflammation, and even tumors, by drawing them over the affected parts for a few minutes." Dr. Perkins patented his discovery, and soon found numerous adherents, many of them being men of wealth and position. His son, Benjamin Doug-

lass Perkins, crossed the Atlantic with the tractors, and in 1798 they were employed in the Royal Hospital in Copenhagen. In London their reputation was quickly established, and they soon became the fashion. The Royal Society accepted Perkins's tractors and book, and passed a vote of thanks to him ; by 1804 a "Perkinean Institution" had been founded, which published transactions and held annual dinners. Lord Rivers was the first president, Governor Franklin vice-president, and Lord Henneker, a fellow of the Royal Society, one of the members. All this time Douglass Perkins was coining money by selling tractors at five guineas each, which cost about ninepence. A hospital was built, where the only treatment was "tractoration." Persons in the highest positions willingly gave testimonials, telling of the marvelous cures wrought on themselves and their friends by these wonderful tractors. The bishops and clergymen on both sides of the Atlantic were most eager to thrust forward evidence on this medical topic; whole pages of panegyric were contributed by them. One writes, "I have used the tractors with success in several other cases in my own family, and, although like Naaman, the Syrian, I can not tell why the waters of Jordan should be better than Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, yet since experience has proved them so no reasoning can change the opinion" ("Currents and Counter-Currents," p. 85).

Many ministers of religion were furnished with tractors gratuitously, and Dr. Holmes remarks that one of the risks of infancy he had to encounter was Perkins's tractors. The medical profession was ever hostile to the new revelation, and their hostility by many was attributed to jealousy and self-interest. The Connecticut Medical Society, in 1797, expelled Dr. Perkins, for violating their regulations against nostrums and secret remedies. The bubble was burst by Dr. Haygarth, of Bath, who experimented on patients with bogus tractors made of wood: he was quite as successful with them as with the five-guinea ones! These experiments did not immediately destroy the belief of the real Perkinistic enthusiasts, because, as Froude says, "belief in the marvelous does not rise from evidence, and will not yield to it." After a time, however, Perkinism passed away so quietly that the date of its death is unrecorded. Lord Byron, in his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," refers to these celebrated Tractors:*

Within the last few years, a form of Perkinism, or rather "metallic medicine," has appeared in Paris, clothed in the garb of science, and under the protecting influence of the great M. Charcot. Gold, silver, and other metals, in the form of coins, are applied to relieve

* "Thus saith the Preacher, 'Naught beneath the sun
Is new,' yet still from change to change we run;
What varied wonders tempt us as they pass!—
The cow-pox, *Tractors*, galvanism, gas,
In turns appear to make the vulgar stare,
Till the swoll'n bubble bursts—and all is air!"

the manifestations of the graver forms of hysteria. It has become quite the 'mode' to visit the Hôpital de la Salpêtrière, and witness the sensational cures performed publicly on the victims of hystero-epilepsy. This notoriety is both pleasing to the patients and the public. If a nervous disease is treated by unusual methods, it becomes common; hysterical subjects having always a morbid desire to make themselves remarkable, and so be the center of attraction, it pleases their vanity and self-love. The consequence of the introduction of metallo-therapy into Parisian hospitals as a mode of treatment is, that in Paris and its neighborhood an enormous number of these rarer forms of hysteria and hystero-epilepsy have been, so to speak, created, and the wards of some of the hospitals there are crowded with female patients, eager to be treated in a sensational and novel manner. They certainly derive benefit from the treatment, because, as a writer in the "Lancet" has said: "The symptoms for which metals are applied can not be ascertained without calling the patient's attention to their existence; the strange and unusual remedy of application of a string of coins can not be adopted without exciting expectation of a local result—an expectation which it has been often demonstrated is sufficient to determine the disappearance of local symptoms in this remarkable disease."

My paper would be very incomplete should I fail to mention the most successful quack this century has produced, John St. John Long. He was the son of an Irish basket-maker, and was born near Done-raile. In his boyhood he assisted his father, but, soon tiring of rush-weaving, being a clever, pushing youth, he attached himself to a Dublin portrait-painter, from whom he obtained some knowledge of painting. When next we hear of him he is starring the provinces as an historical and portrait painter, and an instructor in the art of painting in oils. It was at this time that he adopted the name St. John. With the Limerick gentry he was a great favorite, because of his entertaining manners, and his ability to ride straight across country. Becoming disgusted with provincial life, and feeling that his talents could be more profitably employed in a larger sphere, he went to London. Here, by his pleasant address and persuasive tongue, he managed to get introductions into several respectable houses, and was elected a member of the Royal Society of Literature and of the Royal Asiatic Society. But he could not live on these honors, and was glad to color anatomical drawings for the lecturers and students at the various schools of anatomy. In this way he learned something about the human frame, and before many months had passed he proclaimed to the world the discovery of a wonderful liniment, which, when applied to a healthy part, was as harmless as water, but when applied to a surface covering a diseased organ caused the morbid humor to exude. His success was immediate and great. Patients from London and all parts of the country rushed to consult the miracle-worker in

his house in Harley Street. Ladies of the highest rank hastened to place themselves and their ailing daughters under his care. Long was shrewd enough not to undertake the cure of cases which were apparently hopeless. He pretended to cure consumption by the application of his liniment, and of course, as nine out of ten of his patients were women, and a large majority of these hysterical or perfectly healthy, his success was marvelous. For several years his income exceeded £13,000. He went out into fashionable society, and was a lion in the most aristocratic circles; his ready wit, fascinating manners, intellectual countenance, and handsome figure, procured him a host of admirers, among whom were Lord Ingestre, the Marquis of Sligo, Lady Harriet Kavanah, the Marchioness of Ormond, the Countess of Buckinghamshire, and many others. Long was a superb horseman, hunted regularly, and rode magnificent animals. "On one occasion, as he was cantering round the park, he saw a man strike a woman, and, without an instant's hesitation, he pulled up, leaped from his horse, seized the fellow bodily, and flung him over the park-rails." He had many offers of marriage, but declined them all. He wrote a book called "Discoveries in the Science and Art of Healing," which was well padded with letters from grateful patients, and testimonials of miraculous cures from his aristocratic friends. Soon misfortune came upon him; his liniment was applied to the back and breast of a perfectly healthy girl, inflammation set in, followed by gangrene, and in a few days his patient was no more. Long was convicted of manslaughter, and fined only £200 by a partial judge. In his trial he was supported and petted by his lady admirers, who gave evidence in his favor. One nobleman swore that Long had abstracted pure quicksilver from his head. Soon another patient fell a victim to his treatment; he was again tried for manslaughter, and again had the sympathy of his female friends, but this time he was acquitted. These trials had no effect in lessening his popularity: he went about proclaiming himself a martyr, comparing his case to that of Galileo, Harvey, and others. He died while still young, in 1834, retaining a large practice to the last. His admirers raised a magnificent monument to his memory in Kensal Green Cemetery, adorned with a long and laudatory inscription. After his death, his property became the subject of very tedious litigation. Among the claimants was a woman of humble station in life, who proved to be his wife. This explained his preference for bachelorhood. The wonderful liniment turned out to be *acetic acid*, which looks much like water. He of course substituted a bottle of water when he did not wish the "morbific humor" to come out, and so gulled his willing victims. George Eliot, in "Middlemarch," alludes to St. John Long and his quackeries.

Homeopathy is another form of quackery to which I must shortly allude. It originated in 1796, with Hahnemann, a German physician.

Hahnemann laid down, as necessary to his system, three great foundation truths :

1. *Similia similibus curantur*. This means that diseases are to be cured by the administration of substances which, in healthy individuals, produce the same symptoms or group of symptoms as the disease itself manifests. This idea was not original with Hahnemann. Hippocrates distinctly enunciates it, and since then it has been held by many physicians and others, including Paracelsus, who was the inspirer of Hahnemann.

2. That it is necessary to give remedies in infinitesimal doses. Substances which are given by the regular school in doses of four to five grains, homœopaths should give in quantities of two decillionths of a grain and less. Hahnemann says, in his "Organon": "But, if the patient is very sensitive, it will be sufficient to let him smell once of a vial containing a globule of sugar the size of a mustard-seed ; after the patient has smelled it, the vial is to be recorked, and will thus serve for years without its medical virtues being perceptibly impaired." This second "great truth" was, as has been lately pointed out by Dr. Holmes, adopted from Van Helmont, a physician who flourished in the early part of the seventeenth century. He denied the existence of the four elements, and held up to ridicule the practice of letting blood for the cure of disease.

Van Helmont, in his "Ortus Medicinæ," describes a method of treatment made use of by one Butler, an Irishman, who was formerly physician to James I, and at that time was confined in prison in Belgium. According to Van Helmont, Butler performed wonderful cures with a pebble he had in his possession. He dipped this pebble quickly into a teaspoonful of olive-oil, poured this "magnetized oil" into a large vessel of oil, and directed the patient to take one drop occasionally. When one drop was put on the head of an old woman suffering from hemicrania, the pain instantly disappeared. An abbess was relieved of loss of power in her right arm by merely touching her tongue to the pebble. No doubt reading this book first suggested infinitesimal doses to Hahnemann.

Hahnemann's "third dogma or truth" was, that seven eighths of all chronic diseases are produced by psora, or itch. "This psora," says Hahnemann, "is the sole, true, and fundamental cause that produces all the other countless forms of disease, which go under the names of hysteria, hypochondriasis, debility, insanity, melancholy, idiocy, epilepsy, cancer, gout, paralysis," etc., etc. (I shall not complete the list). He tells the reader in a foot-note that it took him twelve years to trace out the source of all these diseases. This third dogma was original with Hahnemann, and no one now wishes to detract from the laurels he may have won by thus simplifying the etiology of diseases which hitherto have been so obscure in their origin.

Unfortunately for his theory, since the discovery of the *sarcoptes*

hominis, or itch-insect, the dogma about the psora being such a powerful factor in the causation of disease has fallen to the ground, and homœopaths are not fond of referring to it. Like Paracelsus, Hahnemann paid no attention to the pathology* or cause of disease, but only sought for symptoms. For instance, in a case of dropsy, the cause, whether it be from the heart, the kidneys, or the liver, is not inquired into, but the symptom dropsy is treated. Dr. Black, in his "Practice of Homœopathy," tells us: "If the cause of the disease be an inflammation of the brain, a remedy has to be chosen which produces this pathological condition; and, if the exciting cause can be traced to the abuse of alcoholic liquors, a remedy should be selected which is nearest akin to alcohol in its action." This is what is called "a proving."

The dilutions are directed to be prepared by Hahnemann with as much mystery and jugglery as the "sympathetic powder." The following directions are taken from Hahnemann's "Organon": "A grain of the substance, if it is solid, and a drop, if liquid, is to be added to about a third part of 100 grains of sugar of milk in an unglazed porcelain capsule, which has had the polish removed from the lower part of its cavity by rubbing with wet sand; they are to be mingled for an instant with a bone or horn spatula, and then rubbed together for six minutes; then the mass is to be scraped together from the mortar and pestle, which is to take four minutes, then to be again rubbed for six minutes with equal force. Four minutes are then to be devoted to scraping the powder into a heap, and the second third of the 100 grains of sugar of milk to be added. Then they are to be stirred an instant and rubbed six minutes, again to be scraped together for four, and forcibly rubbed for six, once more scraped together for four minutes and rubbed down for six. Then the last third of the 100 grains of sugar of milk is to be added and mingled by stirring with a spatula. Six minutes of forcible rubbing, four of scraping together, six more of rubbing, finish the process. Now to one grain of the powder so manufactured is to be added a third part of 100 grains of sugar of milk, and the whole mixed in a mortar, and having triturated each third portion for six minutes, and scraped for four minutes, the whole powder is placed in a corked bottle and marked with its degree of attenuation, which will be the $\frac{1}{100000}$ or second dilution. The same method is observed for this powder as was detailed for the last for making any attenuation up to a decillionth and quintillionth."

The method for making fluid dilutions is the same, but instead of sugar of milk alcohol is used. The scrapings and triturations are exchanged for shakes of the bottle in certain directions. Toward the close of his life Hahnemann reduced the number of his shakes. He

* A new school, which has arisen within the last few years, also pays no attention to pathology. The members of this school do not wait for symptoms even, but endeavor to "jugulate" the disease at once. They call themselves the "Dosimetric School," because they treat disease by granules containing alkaloids and metallic salts in fixed doses.

says, "A long experience and multiplied observations upon the sick lead me within the last few years to prefer giving only two shakes to medicinal liquids, whereas I formerly used to give ten."

Now to give one an idea of the potency of these drugs: to obtain a grain of the original substance in the third attenuation, one would have to swallow four hundred-weight of sugar; or, to get a drop of the original tincture, a barrel of alcohol would have to be imbibed. Now, this is only the third dilution. In the eighth dilution, to obtain a drop of the tincture the whole Atlantic Ocean full of alcohol would be necessary. Dr. Black, to whom I have referred, says he uses the first, third, sixth, ninth, up to the thirtieth dilution. Imagine the effect of one-drop doses of the thirtieth dilution! The finite mind can not comprehend the infinitesimal when thus expressed.

Homœopathy, although not yet deceased, retains hardly anything of its original character but the name. The efficacy of infinitesimal doses is doubted by the leaders of the school, and even the doctrine of *similia similibus curantur* is not now considered universal. Dr. George Wild, Vice-President of the British Homœopathic Society, in a letter to the London "Lancet," June, 1877, says that he believes "palpable doses of medicine are generally more efficacious in the treatment of disease than infinitesimal ones." Also, that "some diseases are best treated by similars and some by contraries."

The third dogma, with regard to the psora, or itch, has been, since the discovery of the itch-insect, effectually disposed of forever. As Dr. Holmes remarks, "What there is left of the three-legged stool after one of its legs is pulled out, and the other two sawed half or three quarters through, seems hardly worth sitting down on."

The name homœopathy has a charm for the public, and so is retained to juggle with. When, in 1833, the edition of the "Organon" from which I have quoted was published, the translator, in the preface, mentioned that this new system of medicine was spreading through the Continent of Europe with the rapidity of lightning. In 1880, in an address read before the Institute of Homœopathy, in Milwaukee—"How can we best advance Homœopathy?"—the author says: "It can not be denied that homœopathy has not advanced, and is not advancing, as rapidly as we once had just and reasonable grounds for expecting. In Great Britain there are but two hundred and seventy-five homœopathic physicians, and in the United States there is not one legally recognized school of homœopathy." He concludes by saying that there seems to be everywhere stagnation, if not retrogression. Dr. Smyth, in his book on "Medical Heresies," mentions that a short time since the County Hospital, Sacramento, was in charge of homœopathic physicians; quite recently they have been relieved from further attendance by the managers, because of the extravagant expenditure of money for drugs. Among the items are three pounds of salicylic acid and four thousand grains of quinine.

In Ontario, up to ten years ago, homœopaths were yearly registered by scores; since then they have to pass through the same courses and examinations as the regular students, in all but therapeutics and pharmacy. The consequence is, that in ten years there have only been two or three applications for examinations as homœopaths. Homœopathy, being a system utterly devoid of any scientific foundation, is now dying a natural death.

It is difficult to give the exact reason or reasons why quackery is so prevalent. The causes are very various and obscure. Southey says: "Man is a dupable animal; quacks in medicine, quacks in religion, and quacks in politics know this, and act upon that knowledge. There is scarcely any one who may not, like a trout, be taken by tickling." It is extraordinary what a hold the mystic and marvelous still have on many people; there seems to be in almost every one a vein of credulity and superstition against which argument is useless. The disposition to be humbugged preponderates in human nature over reason and common sense. Education, at least the education of the day, apparently has no influence in depriving people of this quality. Men of education are the very ones who have been, and are now, duped by clever quacks. A man may be an able politician, distinguished in literature, of great shrewdness in the ordinary business of life, and yet believe in spiritualism, homœopathy, Perkinism, and tar-water. When he is ill he will probably, after taking in vain the various much vaunted and advertised panaceas, call in some quack who promises a cure in a certain time and in some uncommon manner.

Bishop Berkeley is an example of a man of great attainments, whose mind was obscured by quackery. His tar-water he considered an infallible remedy for all ailments, and wrote a book describing its universal efficacy in curing disease. Dr. O. W. Holmes says: "He might have lived longer, but his fatal illness was so sudden that there was no time to stir up a quart of the panacea. He was a very illustrious man, but he held two very odd opinions, that tar-water was everything, and that the whole material universe was nothing ("Currents and Counter-Currents," p. 72). Alfred Russel Wallace,* the eminent naturalist and evolutionist, Mr. Crooke, the celebrated physicist, and Pasteur, the scientist, are ardent spiritualists, and believe that diseases may be cured by means of spiritualism. Disraeli was a homœopathist; Sir Robert Walpole patronized a quack medicine, said

* Mr. Wallace, in his book on "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," holds that the theory of a future existence as taught by spiritualists is the "only one yet given to the world that can at all commend itself to the modern philosophical mind," and in the spiritual world the law of "progression of the fittest" takes the place of the grand law of the "survival of the fittest" in the material world. He also holds that witches were what are now called "mediums." Owing to the number of witches destroyed for several centuries, the production of spiritual phenomena became impossible, which accounts for spiritualism being of comparatively recent origin.

to dissolve the stone ; Lord Bolingbroke died from the effects of a quack cancer-remedy ; and I could enumerate many more men of equal talents who were similarly affected with this mental obliquity.

Probably the greatest supporters of quacks and quackeries, next to the fair sex, are ministers of religion ; hardly an advertisement of a quack-remedy can be read without coming across testimonials from them. They are generally the first to support any new form of charlatanism. In the country parts, especially, while administering to diseased souls they love to essay the efficacies of new cure-alls on diseased bodies. This weakness may be attributed to their well-known benevolence, and desire to do good to their fellow-men.

If anybody is bold and unblushing enough to assert that he has a remedy which cures every disease, and reiterates it often and loudly enough, he is sure to have a following of believers, among whom will be found men of ability and position. Human credulity is too strong to resist the frequent and positive assertions of the quack. Persons who are not trained in scientific methods of thought, and who know nothing about physiology, even if in the every-day affairs of life they are most clear-headed, are perfectly incompetent to form just opinions on medical matters.

The arguments in favor of the different forms of quackery are always the same. They say, "I was ill, I took a certain remedy or went through a certain form of treatment, and got well." This argument is irresistible, and "therefore quackery is immortal." Now, nine out of ten, nay, I venture to say nineteen out of twenty people, suffering from the ordinary acute diseases, if left to nature, get well. In every case of illness a quack administers remedies, and, of course, if the patient recovers, his recovery is attributed to the remedy ; consequently the proportion of cures is large, and the number grows in the telling. In olden times, when diseases were treated by charms, fastings, prayers, and ceremonies, many of the physicians and priests, not understanding the power of nature, thought themselves favored with supernatural assistance. The quack of to-day, however, thoroughly understands what an able partner Dr. Nature is. If you ask a believer in some form of quackery the *modus operandi* of the drug or application, he tells you that there are many mysteries in nature which it is impossible to understand. If you attribute the effect to imagination, he answers that the remedy is quite as efficacious administered to young children and brute beasts, but, as Dr. Haygarth observes, "In these cases it is not the patient, but the observer, who is deceived by his own imagination."

Now, when any remedy has to be tested as being useful in a certain disease, we have, first, to be sure that the disease exists ; secondly, that it was cured ; and, thirdly, that the remedy cured the disease.

It is very common for quacks to call carbuncles cancers, ordinary

sore-throats diphtheria, and so on, and so boast of their wonderful cures, when Nature alone deserves the praise. In no country in the world are quacks more abundant than in the United States. Every city teems with faith-cure men, rubbers and strokers, clairvoyants, homœopaths, eclectics, bone-setters, cancer-doctors, etc., etc. The advertising columns of the daily and weekly press, in the smaller towns especially, are principally filled with quack advertisements, some of them of the most disgusting and disgraceful nature, and these too in perfectly respectable sheets, which find their way without question into family circles. Religious newspapers are no exceptions to the rule; in them the advertisements have a religious gloss to attract the holy. Perhaps texts are quoted, or the advertiser poses as a philanthropist or clergyman, and treats the poor *gratis*; at the same time he hints that the only reason he is so generous is that he *enjoys* the luxury of doing good to suffering humanity. Quacks have many ways of advertising. One asserts, as a scientific fact, that all diseases originate in disorders of the nervous system, and urges every one, before it is too late, to come and drink of his nervine tonic. Another states that physicians now admit that all diseases are due to impure blood, and vaunts the efficacy of his magnetic blood-purifier. Then comes a vile woodcut of the inventor, with a list of the testimonials of the most laudatory character, showing how this more than human doctor had snatched the writer from the jaws of death, and perhaps something worse; or perhaps we have a "Golden Medical Discovery," and are told that the receipt for this medicine was found in the luggage of a deceased Zulu chief, or that it had been a secret of the medicine-men among the Yucatan Indians for hundreds of years, and was providentially discovered by the advertiser. To suit patients who dislike internal remedies, artful and designing quacks have furnished liver, stomach, and kidney pads, and magnetic belts, giving illustrations at the same time to show how these should be applied. I have been told by a wholesale druggist that thousands are sold by the trade, monthly, to the credulous who are continually seeking for new medical divinities. Their action is much the same as Perkins's Tractors. That these advertisers are successful in selling their wares is shown by the enormous prices they pay for advertising, and the colossal fortunes which men like Holloway, Helmbold, Ayer, and others have made. If bread-pills were to be advertised, until they came into notice, as some wonderful vegetable compound from the center of the "Dark Continent," and that they cured all diseases, they could not fail to acquire celebrity, for, of the thousands who would take them, a certain number would be sure to get well.

Another kind of quack is one who does not charge for advice, but when a patient consults him he terrifies him into believing he has some serious disease which only his medicine can cure. This is a very old form of quackery. Robert Pitt, in a book called "The Crafts and Frauds of Physic exposed," published in London in 1703, says, "A

quack is a practitioner who takes no fee in specie, but makes the deluded patient pay very extravagant fees by the intolerable prices he puts on all cheap medicines, and by passing upon him very many more doses than the disease requires or the constitution can bear."

That this, the last quarter of our nineteenth century of progress and boasted enlightenment, is as rich in credulity and superstition as any of the preceding ones, is proved by the fact that thousands yearly visit shrines and sacred springs, if Catholics, and attend "faith conventions," if Protestants, to be cured of bodily ailments. Not long since one of England's proudest nobles traveled on a pilgrimage to Lourdes in the hopes that Notre Dame de Lourdes would make his only son, who is a deaf-mute, hear and speak. Every day in our own immediate neighborhood, hundreds and thousands of the maimed and the blind make pilgrimages to the sacred spring of Ste. Anne de Beaupré and are miraculously healed—have they not a mountain of crutches bearing witness to the fact? Lately in this city (Montreal), a noted female quack has made the blind to see and the lame to walk—at least I have been told so by eye-witnesses—and in consequence has attracted crowds of infatuated simpletons, who could not hand in their dollars fast enough to secure a bottle of her wonderful nostrum. The priests of a neighboring city, jealous of poaching on their own grounds, denounced her as a charlatan, and told the afflicted that, instead of being duped by this unholy woman, they should make a pilgrimage to Ste. Anne de Beaupré and be healed!

The success of this mode of treatment in hysterical cases is being recognized in France by physicians: they now, when they have an hysterical patient of a devout frame of mind, on whom they have exercised their skill in vain, as a *dernier ressort* advise that a visit should be made to the shrine of Notre Dame de Lourdes. Thus imagination often works a cure where medicine fails. These cures, as I said above, only take place when the disease is one of the imagination.

Why is quackery so much more prevalent in medicine than in any other science? Because the medical quack attributes to himself what is due to Nature. Nature can not build a railway, but she can very often cure disease. A witty Frenchman has said that medicine amuses the patient while Nature cures the disease.

Is there ever any chance of quackery becoming extinct? I fear not as long as human nature exists in its present condition. Still, no doubt, there is a probability of the number of believers in quackery being diminished by a greater diffusion of philosophical habits of thought and a more general knowledge of physiology. A writer many years ago, in one of the London medical papers, said: "The final though distant extinction of quackery is to be hoped for; it forms a fragment of that final triumph of reason and virtue which is the secret consolation of every philanthropist."

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